# THE VERSIONS AND REVISIONS

OF THE

# BIBLE

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE

## Salem County Bible Society

BY

MORRIS H. STRATTON.

PRINTED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

SALEM, N. J.:
National Standard Print.
1890

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# THE VERSIONS AND REVISIONS OF THE BIBLE.

THE original language of the Old Testament is the Hebrew, and that of the New Testament, the Greek; but nearly three hundred years before Christ the Septuagint translation—so called—of the Old Testament into Greek was made by learned Jews, in Alexandria, in Egypt. The authority of this version was so great that it was sometimes claimed that its authors were inspired. Many of the citations from the Old Testament in the New are taken directly from the Septuagint version, and Christianity spread so rapidly among the Gentiles, from the East, that Greek became the sacred language of Christendom.

In the second century of the Christian era other Greek translations were made, of which one, by Aquila, a Jew, which was a closely literal translation, and those made by Symmachus and Theodotion were the most important. These translations were preserved by Origen, in his Hexapla, which was a copy of the Bible in six columns, containing, respectively, the Hebrew text, the same text in Greek letters, the translations of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, and the text of the Septuagint, with corrections and emendations of his own.

Latin, however, and not Greek, was the language of the Roman Empire, and before the time of Tertullian, in the second century, translations into that tongue were made, at different places in North Africa. There was no satisfactory Latin Bible, however, and in the latter part of the fourth century, at the instance of Damasus, Bishop of Rome, Jerome undertook a revision of the Latin text. He began to make his translation from the Greek, but gave that up and translated the

whole Old Testament directly from the Hebrew. He finished his work at Bethlehem, in Judea, where he had founded a monastery and where he studied Hebrew with all the help that he could get from learned Jews.

This version of Jerome was a revised version in its day, and, like other revised versions, had to make its way on its own merits. It was not until the ninth century that the Old Latin—so called—was pushed aside, and the version of Jerome was called the Vulgate (*Editio Vulgata*, the commonly received version), the name by which it is still known and which, in still earlier times, had been given to the Septuagint translation. There were other versions besides these, of great value then, and most useful for reference and for purposes of comparison now, such as the Syriac, of the third century; the Ethiopic, of the third or fourth; the Armenian, of the fifth century, and the Gothic translation of Ulfilas, of the fourth century; but they do not compare in importance with those of the three languages first mentioned.

Hebrew, Greek and Latin were the three languages in which the name of "JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS," was emblazoned on the cross on which the Saviour of the World was lifted up, that He might draw all men unto Him; and through these three languages, in a most wonderful way, the Word of God has been spread among men.

It was through the Greek language that the Bible passed from Asia into Europe, and by means of the Latin language that it was communicated to the nations of the Western Empire. The Greek and Roman civilizations—otherwise such strange phenomena in the world's history, in their rise, progress and decline—fall into place, at once, if we regard them as wonderful but necessary parts of God's great plan of preparation for the Gospel of His Son. When Paul wrote to the Romans he needed just such an instrument of thought as had been polished and perfected by the successive workers in the great school of Greek literature; and when the same Paul, sore beset in his own land and among his own people, appealed unto Cæsar, he needed for his protection that strict system of comprehensive and concentrated law by which Rome then ruled the nations of the world.

More than 300 years before Christ, Alexander had led his Greeks in triumph to the valley of the Mesopotamia, sleeping at night with Aristotle's copy of Homer under his pillow, fulfilling to the letter, even though unwittingly, the prophesied judgments of God against Tyre and Babylon, and founding that great empire, of which the broken fragments were the Greek colonies around the eastern Mediterranean, prepared by Providence to receive the scattered seeds of the early Christian churches.

And when these churches were founded, for the first and only time in history, the known world was under one Ruler. The time had come for which the ages past had been one long preparation. All around the shores of the Mediterranean were the cities which were the graves of great empires. Carthage, and Tyre, and Troy, and Athens, and Alexandria, and Antioch were all under one rule. The fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's vision, strong as iron, had broken in pieces all its predecessors. The sceptre had departed from Judah and a law-giver from between his feet, for Shiloh had come; and "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judea, and Herod being Tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip Tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the Tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the High Priests, the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness," and the great forerunner came out among men, to prepare the way of the Lord.

Nothing would be more interesting or more profitable, did time allow, than to dwell upon the way in which Divine Providence made use of this long prepared world-unity in the introduction of the religion of Christ. It is not too much to say that, never before nor since, not even to-day, could a Christian missionary make the same journey made by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, as he traversed the Roman Empire, caring for all the churches, with the advantages that he enjoyed by being at all times, and everywhere, under one authority, able always to claim the privileges and immunities of a Roman citizen.

Paul was a Roman citizen; as such, in the great crisis of his life, he appeals unto Cæsar; but his great mission was to

the Gentiles and to the churches that he founded among them. His epistles were written in Greek, and at Antioch and Ephesus and Colosse and Laodicea, at Thessalonica and Philippi, no less than at Corinth and Athens, he found the Septuagint ready to his hand in the language of the people. Almost one-fourth of the Epistle to the Hebrews themselves is made up of quotations from this version of the Scriptures, so wonderfully prepared for an emergency so remarkable.

It is a most wonderful thing, when we consider it carefully, that this translation of the seventy—of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek—was made three centuries before Christ, long enough to have become the commonly used version before the time of our Saviour and His Apostles. It is a very serious undertaking now, after so many translations have been made, when every verse and almost every word of the Bible has been for centuries the subject of close friendly and hostile criticism. With all our wealth of historical illustration, with all the errors of the past to warn us, with the experience of the past to guide us, with all our modern appliances of writing materials and printing presses, and books and grammars and dictionaries, it is still, as we have lately seen, a most difficult task for a large committee of our most learned men to make even a new revision, from the original text, of a translation made long ago and already revised and re-revised What a wonderful thing it was, then, for those seventy men, without printing press or grammar or dictionary, without any previous success or failure to warn or guide, to make such a translation as they did; a translation that, after the lapse of more than 2000 years, is a firm foundation for the Biblical scholarship of to-day. No wonder that many then thought that the translation itself was the work of inspiration! This was not true, but our Saviour quoted from it, as did His Apostles, and it is the basis of the Christian Greek.

As we have seen, it was written out by Origen in parallel columns with the original Hebrew and the independent translations of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, and corrected by him by careful comparison with these versions. The immense manuscript book thus formed was deposited at Cæsarea, before the year 250 of our era, where we know that it was

preserved until after the year 650. Before this, in 405, Jerome had finished his Latin revision of both the Old and New Testaments.

It would be outside of my purpose, and I would have no time, to discuss the Canon, but that of the New Testament was fixed before these dates. Both Origen and Jerome give us lists of the books of the New Testament as well as of the Old, as we have them now; and, indeed, the Codex Sinaiticus, the most complete and most important of the old MSS., which was discovered lately by Tischendorf, in a convent on Mt. Sinai, and which contains the entire Bible, was actually written before the year 400, as it now exists in the Imperial Library in St. Petersburg.

From this time to the year 1450, when the first book, a Latin Bible, was printed, the Bible, like other books, was preserved and handed down in manuscript. But there is no comparison between the New Testament and other books written about the same time, with reference to the number and authority of the manuscripts that we now possess. "In the variety and fulness of the evidence on which it rests, the text of the New Testament stands absolutely and unapproachably alone among prose writings," say Drs. Westcott and Hort, in their late critical edition of the New Testament. Very few manuscripts of Greek and Roman classics are older than the ninth or tenth centuries The Medicean manuscript of Virgil is of the fourth century. Tacitus lived after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and left a description of it, and the works of Tacitus were carefully collected and written out by his descendant, an Emperor of Rome, 200 years afterwards But much of what he wrote has been lost, and the oldest manuscript we have of his annals is of the eleventh century. Of the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, himself an Emperor, of the second century after Christ, only one complete copy is in existence; while the number of manuscripts of the New Testament is nearly 2000 and is gradually increasing with discoveries in ancient libraries and convents, especially in the East.

With reference to the classics, the history of the time from the fifth century to the renaissance, or new birth of letters, in the fifteenth century, is an almost entire blank. Copies were

made, in the monasteries, by the Monks, but the very term, "The *renaissance*," shows, what was true, that to the people generally the literary remains of antiquity were practically dead. It was never so, however, with reference to the Bible. We know a good deal of what was done in the translation and dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, even during these dark ages. I will have time to refer to a few only, of such facts as are most interesting to us.

The Bible must have been carried into Great Britain very early, for we are told by Gildas that, in the persecution under Diocletian, in the beginning of the fourth century, English martyrs gave up their lives rather than renounce their Saviour, and that all the copies of the Holy Scriptures that could be found were burned in the street.

The venerable Bede says that St. Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, in the first half of the seventh century employed those about him, laymen and clergy, in reading and learning the Scriptures, and in the same century Cædmon, a Monk, of Whitley, made a metrical version of parts of the Pentateuch into Anglo-Saxon.

There is, in the National Library in Paris, a copy of an English Psalter, which was translated by St. Aldhem, Abbot of Malmsbury, and at his death, in 709, Bishop of Sherborne.

Of almost the same date is the Lindisfarne Evangelistarium, a beautiful book now in the British Museum, written in Latin by Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, about 680, illuminated by Ethelwold, afterwards Bishop of the same See, and supplied with an interlinear English translation by Ealdred, afterwards, from 957 to 968, Bishop of Chester-le-street.

The Rushworth Gospels, now in the Bodleian Library, were written about the same time, between 800 and 900.

In 995, the Pentateuch was translated by Ealfrid, Archbishop of Canterbury, into Saxon; and in 1290, an English translation was made, of which three copies are now in the Libraries in Oxford And, after these and others whom I have not time even to name, and many others whose names are lost, came the great translators of the fourteenth century, Wiclif and Hereford, in 1384, and Purvey, in 1388. Of Purvey's Bible

more than 150 copies still exist, all dated before 1430, and all, of course, in manuscript.

Wiclif had published his commentary on the Gospels, that is to say, had given it out in writing to be copied, in 1360; and deserves, as he has always received, the credit of this great translation of the glad tidings of great joy into English.

His enemies unwittingly took care of this. In 1408, at the instance of Archbishop Arundel, it was, in Convocation, forbidden to translate the text of the Bible into English, or to read the notes of Wiclif. And, in 1428, the Council of Constance caused his bones to be dug up and burned, and the ashes cast into the brook Swift; when, as Fuller says, "the Swift conveyed them into the Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean; and thus the ashes of Wiclif are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over." In 1880, five hundred years after the completion of his English Bible, Wiclif's memory was celebrated in five continents.

Of course, what I have just mentioned are merely illustrations of work done in preserving the Bible in one part of the world. We have manuscripts in other languages; and we have more than seventeen hundred manuscripts of the Greek Testament, including all classes; and the number is gradually increasing, through discoveries in ancient libraries and convents, especially in the East.

We return to the Vulgate, or Latin translation of the whole Bible, made by Jerome, finished in 405.

The Vulgate was revised by Alcuin, at the request of Charlemagne; and between 1300 and 1400 a German translation of the Vulgate was made.

The French translation by Peter de Vaux, or Waldo, in 1160, was an important event in the history of the Bible and of the church.

In 1230 Hugo de St. Caro was a most voluminous writer on the Bible. He wrote a revised text of the Vulgate, a commentary, afterwards published in eight volumes folio, and a Concordance to the Vulgate. It was to make easy the use of his Concordance that he devised his plan of marking the lines

by letters, and dividing the text into sections, and so laid the foundation for our division into chapters and verses.

This commentary of Hugo was preserved and published at Basle, first in 1487, afterwards in 1502, and frequently afterwards. The volume of the edition of 1502, which I am so fortunate as to be able to show you, gives us a good idea of the immense industry of the writers in the Monasteries, to say nothing of the labor of its composition. This work was circulated in manuscript for more than 200 years before the invention of printing.

Of course almost all of these manuscripts so written have been lost. On examining this volume, we can see for ourselves what became of many of them. A section of a large and beautifully written manuscript has been used in the binding. Valuable manuscripts have been recovered from such positions.

What Dean Alford calls "perhaps the earliest and most important of all versions"—the "Curetonion Syriac," so called, a fragment of the Gospels in the early Syriac dialect, was found in 1842, with 550 other MSS., in a convent in the Nitrian Desert, seventy miles N. W. of Cairo, brought to the British Museum and translated and published by Cureton in 1858. Dr. Brugsch, the celebrated Egyptologist, afterwards discovered three additional leaves in the binding of a MS., of the Peshito version, which came from the same convent in 1871.

In 1450, however, a new era was introduced by the publication in Mayence of the first printed book, a copy of the Latin Bible, commonly known as the Mazarin Bible, of which a copy is in the Lenox Library, in New York.

"We may see," Hallam says, "in imagination this venerable and splendid volume leading up the crowded myriads of its followers, and imploring, as it were, a blessing on the new art, by dedicating its first fruits to the service of Heaven!" Certainly Heaven has bountifully blessed and put to noble use this new art. Nothing in history is more interesting or shows more clearly how "through the ages one unceasing purpose runs," than the preparation made during the preceding century, in what is recognized as the revival, the new birth of literature, for the demands to be made upon scholarship by the printing

press. Latin, Greek and Hebrew had to be learned over again, and the record of the early editions of the Bible show how well the work had been done.

Three Latin Bibles, in several editions, were printed at Mayence before 1472, and one in Rome in 1471. In 1475 folio Bibles were printed in Placentia, in Venice, at Basle and in Paris, and in Cologne.

Hebrew Bibles—the Old Testament—were printed at Soncino in 1488, in Naples in 1491–2, at Brescia in 1494.

Greek Bibles were not printed so soon. Greek is a particularly hard language to print, but, as soon as the type was prepared, Greek Bibles were printed; the first in the great Complutensian Polyglott in 1517, and the next year by Aldus, in Venice, and then in Octavo, by Cephelaeus, in 1526, at Strasburg.

Long before this, however, a wonderful work had been done in printing the Bible in the more modern languages. It is not, I think, generally understood how many editions of the Bible were printed long before the time of Luther and the Reformation. It was the printing and the spreading abroad, among the people who could read them, of these Bibles, that made possible the Reformation under Luther.

And Luther never could have done the work that he did had it not been for the life and labors of that great scholar and great man, John Reuchlin, whose name and memory should be held in high honor among all lovers of the Bible.

This man, "chosen by God for this work," as D'Aubigne says of him: "The instrument of the Divine counsel," as Luther styled him, in a letter of gratitude and congratulations written to him after his great fight with the mendicant monks, was born in 1455, at Pforzheim, in Germany. He was not an ecclesiastic but a lawyer and diplomatist; and it was when on journeys of business at Paris and Rome, that he laid the foundations of his vast and varied learning. He was called the *miraculum trilingue,* and learned Greek from the Greek scholars, and Hebrew from the Oriental scholars, whom he met at Rome, driven from the East, as they were, by the Turkish invasion of the eastern empire At the age of twenty he composed for Amerbach a Latin grammar, of which an edition was published yearly for

thirty years. Four years later he prepared a Greek grammar for his own use, and that of his pupils And then he opened the door by which access was made possible to the locked-up treasures of biblical lore by publishing his Hebrew grammar and dictionary, with a commentary on the Penitential Psalms, a work he says, "hitherto unheard of, and which has caused me the greatest trouble and a large part of my fortune."

He was a great teacher, and, although a man of affairs all his life, kept up a constant correspondence with the scholars of the world, who loved and honored him as their common friend and leader. And when the mendicant monks tried to procure a decree from the Emperor, that all books in Hebrew, except the Bible, should be collected and burned; and Reuchlin, to whom the matter was referred by the Emperor, protested against it, and these monks made a combined attack upon him, the scholars of the world gathered around him, and a great victory was gained, and the most formidable enemy of the revival of learning, and of the Reformation of Religion, received a crippling blow in advance. By means of Reuchlin, as Luther wrote to him, "the Lord had brought it about that Germany, where for so many centuries the knowledge of the Scriptures had been not so much hindered as destroyed, began to breathe again."

For a thousand years the Latin Vulgate had been the Bible of Christendom. Luther's translation into German from the original Greek and Hebrew could not have been made, had Reuchlin not opened up the long lost road to a practical knowledge of Hebrew. John Reuchlin was as clearly raised up by God to do the great and necessary work that he did, as were the Apostles and Prophets themselves; and his name should always be remembered and honored among those who love the Bible.

In 1462 and the years just after, Fust and Schaeffer printed four editions of a German Bible at Mentz and Augsburg. In 1471, the Italian Bible of Malermi was published, of which twelve editions were printed; and in 1490 another was printed at the Giunta press in Venice.

Between 1470 and 1475 a magnificent illustrated Bible, of a large folio size, was printed at Cologne, in the local German.

(Mr. William C. Prime has traced the illustrations that first appeared in this Bible through a long series of Bibles and other works, for over a hundred years, in a most interesting and instructive article, in *Harper's Magazine*, for April, 1880.)

Anthony Koburger, the great Wurtemburg printer, for whom and by whose help John Amerbach printed the commentary of Cardinal Hugo, of which we have the seventh volume here, published a superb illustrated Bible in Nuremburg, which is known as the *ninth* German Bible, and which was published in 1483, the year in which Luther was born.

Anthony Koburger was a great printer and publisher of Bibles. Amerbach, at Basle, was not the only one who printed for him. Lyons early became a great publishing centre, especially for Bibles and service books. Sacon moved there from Italy and printed editions in 1516 and 1521, among others, for Koburger. And at Lyons, in 1477, the Bible was printed in French.

In 1475 the Bohemian New Testament appeared, and in 1488 the whole Bible was printed in that interesting country, where the doctrines of Wiclif found so early and ready an acceptance, and which had been consecrated by the martyrdom of Huss more than seventy years before.

And it is interesting for us to know that in no language, according to Hallam, were there so many editions of the Scriptures as in that of Flanders, of Holland. In 1477 the Bible was printed in Dutch, at Delft, and again in 1497, and several times before the Reformation, at Antwerp and in Amsterdam.

The compiler of the catalogue of Bibles in the Caxton exhibition, in London, in 1877, says that before 1492, nearly 1000 editions of the Bible or parts of the Bible had been published in Europe.

Of course this includes the ancient languages as well as the modern, but I think it probable that many of you will be surprised at the number of editions published so early, in the modern languages, and of course there are very many of which I have never read or heard.

There must certainly be something wrong about the story so often told, that Luther could never find a complete copy of

the Bible, until after he had entered the Monastery at Erfurt, in 1505, for this copy of the commentary of Hugo was printed in Basle, in Germany, in 1502, and is the last volume and contains all Paul's Epistles, and the text: "The just shall live by faith," or, as the Vulgate has it: "The just man lives by faith," conspicuously displayed. And when we think of it, there is nothing strange in the fact that the Bible came first and the Reformation afterwards.

It is true that Luther's translation of the Bible into German, published in 1522, at once took the place of the others as the standard German Bible, and as the basis of the Bibles in cognate languages. A Flemish version of the New Testament, founded on Luther's, came out in Antwerp the same year, 1522, and was reprinted twelve times in the next five years. The entire Bible was printed in Dutch before 1536 in fifteen editions. One at Louvain, one at Amsterdam, and thirteen at Antwerp, and in the same time thirty-four editions of the New Testament, most of them founded on Luther's translation.

But while so much was done in Germany and Holland before this date (1536), no complete Bible was printed in English before 1535, nor in England before 1538. In printing the earlier editions of his New Testament and Bible William Tyndale was forced to use the presses of Holland and Germany, and prepared his translations under the potent protection of Luther.

The first editions of the New Testament were printed at Cologne and Worms, and sent over to England in 1526. Other editions, both of the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament, were printed at Antwerp, and at Marburg, in 1528, 1530 and 1534 and 1535, and about the time of the execution of Tyndale, in 1536, a reprint of his edition of 1534 was issued in England by the King's printer. This edition of 1534 was printed by George Joye, who afterwards quarreled with Tyndale, but who deserves mention as having printed at Strasburg English translations of the Psalms, in 1530, of Isaiah in 1531 and of Jeremiah in 1534.

While this work of Tyndale's was going on, Miles Coverdale, an Augustinian friar, and afterwards Bishop of Exeter, was preparing a complete edition of the English Bible, which

was published in 1535. It was printed in Antwerp, and, as stated on the title page, was "faithfully and truly translated out of the Dutch and Latin into English."

The next English Bible was called Matthew's Bible, and was also printed at Antwerp, as having been "truly and purely translated into English by Thomas Matthew." "Thomas Matthew" was really John Rogers, afterwards the first of the sufferers at Smithfield. It appered in 1537, and was substantially a reproduction, partly of Tyndale's and partly of Coverdale's translations.

The same may be said of Taverner's Bible, which, however, was printed in England, in 1539. All these editions were private enterprises, and had no other authority than that derived from their own merits.

In this same year, however, 1539, an authorized version was issued, prepared by a commission appointed in 1530 by Henry VIII. It is sometimes called the great Bible, on account of its size, and sometimes Cranmer's Bible, after the then Archbishop of Canterbury. Seven editions of this Bible were issued during the next three years. It was practically the authorized version for the next seventy years, and its version of the Psalms still forms part of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England.

A revision of this edition was issued soon after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, in 1568, under the direction of Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, called generally the Bishop's Bible. It was not, however, generally received. It was too large for household use, and in the meantime, in 1560, a Bible of much more convenient size was produced by the English refugees at Geneva, during the latter part of Mary's reign. This became the ordinarily used Bible of the English people for the next two generations. It contained a marginal commentary, which was very cordially received by the Puritans and as cordially hated by James I, and had the chapters divided into verses. Over 200 editions of this Bible were printed, of various sizes, and it gave way, at last, very slowly, to our present authorized version, after 1611. It is often called the "Breeches Bible," on account of the translation of Genesis 2 :7, "They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves breeches."

The present authorized version, the Bible as printed by the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society, and which has been for so many years known and honored wherever the English tongue is known, is itself a revision of the Bishop's Bible of 1568. It is the result of the labor of forty-seven of the most learned and pious scholars of the age, during the seven years between 1604 and 1611, when it was published, and was really the result of the diligent revision and comparison of former translations, not only in English, but in French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch and German, with the originals in Greek and Hebrew.

It is so excellent a translation, endeared to us by so many associations, that there is a natural feeling of impatience with the idea of the necessity for any new revision. But we have seen that it is itseif the last of a long series of revisions. One of its great merits is that it preserves for us the old English of Wiclif and Tyndale, and one of the main reasons for a revision is that it still retains what we all know to be some of the errors fallen into by those early translators.

In the article on the English Bible in the current edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is printed as given in the authorized version and in Wiclif's translation, and the closeness of agreement is most surprising. At the same time, such manifest errors as the use of the word "Easter" for the Jewish Passover, and "such as should be saved," instead of "those that were being saved," in the last verse of the second chapter of Acts, have come down through all the successive revisions to be set right in the last.

The last revision of our translation of the Bible—what we are now learning to know as the "Revised Version"—is still on trial, so to speak, and may be itself revised, before it is accepted by our Society. It is a wonderful work, however, and there are many things connected with its origin and progress that seem to mark it as favored by the providence of its author.

Dr. Schaff says that the bringing together of such a combination of men and means as had never before existed in the history of the Bible, is to be regarded almost in the light of a moral miracle.

It was the work of one hundred and one scholars and Divines in England and America, who worked together with wonderful harmony and success from June, 1870, to May, 1881, when the Revised Version of the New Testament was issued in both countries, on the 17th in England and on the 20th in New York. We all remember the unparalleled demand for the book. A telegram from London, on May 21st, reported the sale of 2,000,000 copies in that city. The New York agent of the Clarendon Press sold 365,000 copies of the Oxford edition alone before the end of the year. During the same period thirty or more reprints were put in the market in this country. On May 22d, two days after its issue, two daily papers in Chicago published the entire book in extra editions, the four Gospels, Acts and Romans having been telegraphed from New York—about 118,000 words.

"Such facts," says Dr. Schaff, "stand isolated and alone in the whole history of literature, and furnish the best answer to the attacks and sneers of modern infidelity, which would fain make the world believe that the Bible is antiquated. All the ancient and modern classics together, if they were reissued in improved editions and translations, could not awaken such an interest and enthusiasm. England and America have honored themselves by thus honoring the Bible, and proved its inseparable connexion with true freedom and progress."

What makes this last revision most remarkable, however, is that it is, as regards the New Testament, at least, a revision of the original Greek text, as well as of the translation into English, and a revision in the right direction, practically a reproduction of the original text.

The wealth of new material in the hands of the scholars of to-day, and the ability which we now have of using everywhere what is known anywhere, have enabled the revisers of the text of the New Testament to do what would have been impossible even fifty years ago. The discovery, by Dr. Tischendorf, in 1859, in a convent on Mt. Sinai, of a complete MS. of the New Testament, written before Jerome finished his revision of the old Latin versions, would, of itself, have been enough to make the new version necessary.

That this manuscript should have remained unhurt all these years in that Convent on Mt. Sinai; that Dr. Tischendorf, the one man in all Europe best fitted by learning, by experience, by temperament, by power of effective work, should have been at that far-off spot, just in time to rescue forty-three leaves of the Septuagint from a waste basket in 1844; that after a fruitless visit, in 1853, he was able, in 1859, to visit the Convent again, with the powerful aid, this time of the recommendation of the Czar of all the Russias, and to recover this priceless treasure in time to publish, in 1872, the last and greatest of his twenty-four editions of the Greek Testament, just before he was called to rest from his indefatigable labors, and just in time for the great effort which was made, in the decade, 1871-1881, to bring all the resources of modern learning to bear on the purification of the text of the New Testament; these seem to be coincidences, or proofs of the Divine Superintendence of events, as we are in the habit of looking at the facts of history, in their relation to the unceasing plan that runs through the ages.

But I have already taken too much time to attempt to give the history of the printed Greek Testament. The first Greek Testament published was that of Erasmus, which was issued at Basle, in 1516. The most important of its successors were the Stephens Testaments, of 1546, 1549 and 1550; that of Beza, with a Latin translation, and those of the Elzevirs, the great printers of Holland, in 1624, 1633, 1641, 1656, 1662, 1670, 1678.

These editions were issued by printers on their own responsibility, and as Greek is a particularly hard language to print accurately, it is not remarkable that many errors crept in.

Then, as now, MSS. were discovered and collated, the list of various readings, of course, increased, until the publication of the great Greek Testament of Mill, in 1707 This edition set out over 30,000 various readings in the printed text of the New Testament and created something like a panic among such even of the clergy and of scholars who were not familiar with the character and causes of these variations. This had the effect of calling out that great scholar and great man, Richard Bentley, who, in a letter to the Archbishop of Canter-

bury, written in 1716, proposed to go back to the original Latin version of Jerome, and the older Latin versions of which his was a revision, and by collating them with the oldest Greek MSS. then known, to restore the text of the fourth century. Bentley was never able to carry out his plan. He left, at his death, however, a vast mass of material, and had printed with his "proposals," the last chapter of Revelations as a specimen of what he wanted to do.

More than a century after, and after the noble and fruitful labors of Bengel and Griesbach and Wetstein, Bentley's idea was taken up and carried out by Lachmann and his successors. And the New Testament, as edited by Drs. Westcott and Hort, is the last and best result of the scholarship of the ages.

And nothing is clearer, in the light of the fuller knowledge that we now have, than that, in all these centuries, through the dark ages, through years of ignorance and error, the guiding hand of God has directed the destiny of His word among men. In Hebrew and Greek and Latin the word of the living God is eternally one and the same. The more it is studied, and the more we know about it, the more clearly its divine character appears. A miracle in its origin and in its influence, it is no less a miracle in its preservation and its perpetuation.

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